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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WESTERN HEMISPHERE: VENEZUELA, CHAVEZ '
REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

Chavez's change in course

Editorial in liberal Folha de S.Paulo (6/10) says: "[Hugo] Chavez's change in relation to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) was so great that it surprised everyone.... He defended that the group should free all hostages and that Latin America has not place for guerillas any more.... But the president's move is better understood through Venezuela's internal politics.... A victory in [the] November [election] is seen as crucial for Chavez's plans to reintroduce, in 2010, a proposal to amend the Constitution in order to allow him to seek reelection indefinitely.... Even if for the wrong reasons it is good that he distances himself from the Farc. Equally - it is important to note that since the government's defeat in the December referendum which frustrated the president's attempt to obtain superpowers, politics has started to return to Venezuela."

White